

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PINNER PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Pinner

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102194

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Carter

Reporting inspector: Mr Martin Beale  
19385

Date of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 190408

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	8 to 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Melbourne Avenue Pinner Middlesex
Postcode:	HA5 5TJ
Telephone number:	020 8863 1239
Fax number:	020 8424 8618
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gill Marr
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Registered inspector	Mathematics; physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements; teaching
15527	Christine Laverock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; the school's care for its pupils; partnership with parents
4126	Clive Parsons	Team inspector	Science; information and communication technology; design and technology	Leadership and management
22147	Anne Holland	Team inspector	Art; geography	Curriculum
27301	Cynthia Thumwood	Team inspector	History; music; religious education; special educational needs	
1963	Sibhani Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	English; equal opportunities; English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Brookbridge Education

2 Haselwood Drive  
 Enfield  
 Middlesex  
 EN2 7BU

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 33 Kingsway  
 London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Pinner Park Middle School has 363 boys and girls between the ages of eight and twelve on its roll, making it the same size as other schools of its type. It serves a culturally mixed area, and almost a quarter of the pupils are of Indian ethnic origin. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is high. Most pupils come from economically advantaged families. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, but the figures are influenced by the fact that the local authority does not provide a hot meal. The number of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is average but has increased considerably since the last inspection. The attainment on entry of pupils in the current Year 4 is broadly average but is lower than in previous years.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is effective in enabling all its pupils to benefit from the broad and varied educational opportunities provided. Good leadership from the headteacher and governors provides a clear direction for the school, based on improving teaching and pupil achievement. As a result, the school provides satisfactory value for money. Teaching is good overall and as a consequence most pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2 and further satisfactory progress in Year 7. Standards in many subjects are above average. Reading and mathematics are particular strengths but writing remains below average although improving. The provision for music, including the large number of pupils learning an instrument, is a major strength.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are above average in mathematics, art, geography, history and religious education.
- The good teaching at Key Stage 2 is enabling most pupils to achieve well and make good progress.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher and governors has provided a clear direction for school improvement in the last two years.
- The high quality of music teaching both in lessons and from visiting instrumental specialists is leading to high standards and an enthusiasm for the subject.
- Reading is promoted effectively throughout the school.
- The school promotes the pupils' personal development well, strengths being the development of spiritual and cultural awareness.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards are below expectations in physical education throughout the school, and in French in Year 7.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English are limited.
- Not all lessons are planned from a clear understanding of what all pupils already know.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not regularly provide all pupils with a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- There is an inconsistent approach to managing discipline in lessons and around the school.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in 1996, with the most significant progress having been made in the last 18 months as a result of the clear direction given by the headteacher and governors and the effective monitoring of lessons. This has resulted in a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching. National Curriculum test results in 2001 are above those in 1997. Curriculum planning has improved but teachers still do not consistently use test and other information to guide and adjust planning.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average points scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	C	E
mathematics	A*	C	C	D
science	A*	C	C	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

National Curriculum test results fell from a high point in 1998, when standards in mathematics and science were in the top 5% of schools. After 1998 the school, with the agreement of most parents, continued to prepare pupils for national tests but stopped the concentrated revision that had badly affected other aspects of learning. Results were close to the national average in 2000. Standards in mathematics and science were below, and English well below, similar schools. Standards in writing were considerably lower than in reading, with boys doing particularly badly. Pupils of Indian ethnic background achieved better results on average than other pupils. There has been an improvement in 2001, particularly in writing and mathematics and also in the proportion of the pupils achieving results above the expected level for their age in all three subjects. The school's target has been exceeded in English but not quite met in mathematics.

Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 2 and make good progress. Overall standards are above expected levels, particularly so in music where standards are very high. Standards in mathematics have improved and are now above average, and although there has been a marked improvement in writing, standards in English remain close to the national expectation. Overall progress is less marked in Year 7 and although pupils achieve satisfactorily, standards are close to nationally expected levels. There are weaknesses in physical education throughout the school and in French in Year 7, which result in below expected standards. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets, and pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils respond with enthusiasm when teaching is challenging and interesting, and also when teachers praise their efforts and good behaviour. Pupils are keen, usually work hard and have positive attitudes to their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall. Most pupils behave well and settle quickly to their work. Pupils are clear about school rules and usually obey them.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships and the pupils' personal development are good. Pupils are aware of the impact of their actions on others and respect one another's feelings, values and beliefs. Pupils fulfil diligently the responsibilities that they are given.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are mostly punctual to school.

The majority of pupils take pride in their work, although there are inconsistencies between subjects and year groups. Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular activities provided for them. Exclusions have increased in number recently; they are all fixed term for one day only and relate to serious incidents.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 8-11 years	aged 11-12 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection when a quarter of lessons were less than satisfactory. Teaching is now satisfactory or better in 95% of lessons and very good or excellent in almost a quarter. There is more of the higher quality teaching at Key Stage 2 than in Year 7. The best teaching is lively and challenging, resulting in pupils concentrating well, working hard and learning new skills and ideas rapidly. Lessons are well planned and carefully structured so that learning develops systematically and builds on what has gone before. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively when solving problems or undertaking investigations. Any shortcomings in teaching are because some teachers adopt a limited range of methods, aim their teaching at the middle ability in the class and in a few cases do not control the pupils' behaviour constructively. This leads to pupils losing interest and a slow pace of learning. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been introduced successfully and as a result the teaching of both English and mathematics is good. The correct use of subject-specific vocabulary is promoted well and reading is taught well, but opportunities to develop writing beyond English lessons and numeracy in subjects other than mathematics, are limited. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are provided for well by effective support either in lessons or in small withdrawal groups for more intensive teaching.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a wide range of learning opportunities supported by good music tuition and a wide range of trips and visits that effectively promote all aspects of pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Teachers give careful attention to targets on individual education plans when planning lessons and deploying support staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Suitable account is taken of the needs of pupils at early and more advanced stages of learning English, enabling them to have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made overall for the pupils' personal development. The promotion of spiritual and cultural awareness is very good and is a strength of the school; the provision for moral and social development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the pupils.

All National Curriculum requirements are met but the time provided for physical education, and for French in Year 7, is too short to enable pupils to study each subject to sufficient depth. The school has established effective links with parents, several of whom offer support either in lessons or through fundraising. There are inconsistencies in the way in which teachers control the behaviour of the pupils, largely because school policy is unclear.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school well and is providing a clear direction based on improving teaching as the key to raising standards. He is supported well in this by other staff with management responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and are committed to its improvement. They fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The systematic monitoring of lessons has resulted in improvements in teaching. Good use is made of test and other data to track the school's performance, but more use could be made of the information to set targets and influence planning.
The strategic use of resources	The funding available to the school is used well to meet identified priorities such as the new computer suite.

Staff strive successfully to meet the school's aims and in particular to provide a broad education without placing undue emphasis on preparing pupils for national tests. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all satisfactory. The school seeks value for money when purchasing goods and services.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• There is a strong sense of the school as a community</li> <li>• The behaviour in the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistencies in the setting of homework</li> <li>• Activities outside lessons</li> <li>• Information about their children's progress</li> <li>• A closer relationship between parents and the school</li> </ul>

There was a considerable difference between the views expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, which were largely favourable, and those in the questionnaire. Inspectors support the approving views expressed by parents. Several parents do not have confidence in important aspects of the school's work, although parental concerns are not fully justified by inspection evidence. There are some inconsistencies in homework but much that was observed being set supported pupils' learning well. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music but also an enriching variety of trips and visits. Annual reports are satisfactory, but could give clearer judgements about all aspects of a subject.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds improved after the last inspection and reached a high point in 1998, when they put the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Results in English fell in 1999 and again in 2000. Results also fell sharply in 1999 in mathematics and science, but rose again in 2000. The 2001 test results have improved considerably in English, particularly in writing, and in mathematics; however, the most significant change is the increase in the proportion of pupils achieving above the level expected for their age in all three core subjects. No national comparisons are available yet for 2001 but the target for English has been exceeded while the target for mathematics has only been missed by a small margin.
2. Results in English, mathematics and science were all close to the national average in 2000 (the last year for which comparisons are available). Pupils of Indian ethnic background achieve better results on average than other pupils and are often better represented in higher ability groups and top mathematics sets. Many of these pupils are from second and third generation families and are therefore not learning English as an additional language. Results in mathematics and science were below those in similar schools (schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals), while results in English were well below similar schools. This comparison is slightly misleading for Pinner Park. The reason for this is that several parents do not take up their entitlement, as the school does not provide a hot meal.
3. One factor influencing results since 1998 is that the school no longer believes in putting pupils through a concentrated revision programme as in many schools, although pupils are prepared for the tests by working through past papers. Parents largely support this position. As a consequence the school is able to maintain a broader curriculum than seen in many schools throughout Year 6 and pupils achieve above average standards in many subjects. Test results were above the attainment demonstrated by the pupils in their lessons and day-to-day work at the time of the previous inspection. Overall attainment was only average and the pupils' achievements satisfactory. There is now a much closer match between the pupils' knowledge and understanding and their performance in the tests. The standards of work seen by the end of Year 6 are now above average and the pupils achieve well.
4. One other factor that has a bearing on the lower results is that the attainment of pupils on entry to the school in Year 4 has been falling. This is evident from their test results as seven-year-olds and also from a considerable increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. This is particularly marked in the current Year 4, where standards are lower overall, and indications from the first school are that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs will increase further in the next few years.
5. Boys achieved lower results than in 2000, although there had been no significant pattern to any variation by gender in previous years with one important exception. Pupils, and boys in particular, have achieved much lower results in the writing aspect of the English test in recent years than in reading. Virtually all of the pupils achieved at least the nationally expected standard in reading in 2000, whereas only a quarter of boys achieved this level in writing. Reading continues to be a strength of the school. Most pupils achieve well, make good progress and reach standards that are well above average. The school has introduced measures to tackle weaknesses in writing. These are already starting to have an impact. As a consequence attainment in writing is judged to have improved from well below average to below average. Satisfactory progress is made by pupils in speaking and listening and standards are above average. Subject-specific vocabulary is developed and emphasised well, but more could be done to promote writing in other subjects.
6. There has been an improvement in standards in mathematics this year as a result of some good teaching and the successful implementation of the national strategy for numeracy. Standards

are now above average. Pupils' mental recall of number facts is good, as is their use of formal written methods of calculation. They have a good understanding of the properties of shapes, such as their symmetries, and can handle, present and interpret data clearly. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to consolidate their learning through solving problems and undertaking investigations. Consequently they use their mathematical skills well in numeracy lessons; however, more could be done to provide opportunities to develop and apply their skills in other subjects.

7. Standards have improved in information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection, partly as a result of the greater access pupils now have to computers in the new suite. Many pupils are very competent users, being able to undertake most routine activities independently of adult support. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in lessons when developing ICT skills, and standards overall are in line with national expectations; however, the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is inconsistent and not systematically planned.
8. There has been an improvement in the development of investigative skills in science since the last inspection and as a consequence several pupils demonstrate a high level of scientific understanding. Standards are improving and pupils are achieving appropriately. Attainment in science is close to national expectations for the age of the pupils.
9. Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 2 and make good progress in most subjects. Attainment in each of art, geography, history and religious education is above national expectations. Attainment has also improved in design and technology and pupils are now achieving standards that are expected nationally for their age. Standards are high in music, not only in lessons but also in instrumental tuition and the various choirs and groups, which are a strong feature of the school. These standards are maintained in each subject in Year 7. Progress is slower here than in Key Stage 2, largely because there is less high quality teaching, classes are shared and there have been staff changes during the year. In spite of this, most pupils achieve appropriately. The only subjects showing particular weaknesses at present, where attainment is below nationally expected levels, are physical education throughout the school and French in Year 7. This is in part as a result of insufficient time being allocated to each subject but also to weaknesses in teaching in the case of French.
10. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress towards their identified targets. They mostly achieve appropriately, but in some cases where the support they receive is particularly effective, they make good progress. Pupils at early and more advanced stages of learning English as an additional language make good progress in their development of English language skills. They have full access to the curriculum and as a consequence most achieve standards comparable to others in their class. The school has not identified any gifted or talented pupils and has not put any special programmes in place to support their learning. In spite of this there are examples of gifted pupils achieving particularly well, such as in mathematics, where a small group in each year are working on material well above expectations and in music, where high standards are achieved by individual instrumentalists.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. As at the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to the school are good. Pupils respond very positively in lessons when teaching is challenging and interesting, and also when their efforts and good behaviour are praised. They are keen to participate when asked questions or asked to carry out independent research and usually work hard. The majority of pupils take pride in their work. Pupils enjoy the activities provided for them outside lessons, such as choir and netball.
12. Pupils' attitudes are directly affected by the quality of teaching. When teaching is very good it results in good attitudes to learning from pupils and good progress. Attitudes are generally more positive at Key Stage 2 than in Year 7. Very good attitudes to learning were observed in a Year 5 literacy lesson. This began with a poetry 'rap' written by the class teacher to which pupils were encouraged to tap their fingers and move in time to music. Pupils enjoyed this enormously and were keen to create their own piece to perform in front of the rest of the class. They achieved a very high standard of work as a result.

13. Behaviour was described as very good at the time of the last inspection; it is now good overall. A small number of pupils present challenging behaviour, but the vast majority behave well and settle quickly to work. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils talk of good relationships with each other. They express confidence in the headteacher and most teachers for dealing with incidents which occur, although there are some playground incidents that they feel are not dealt with effectively. Pupils are clear about school rules and usually obey them, although outdoor quiet areas are not always treated as they should be. Exclusions have increased in number recently from one last year to four this year. They were all fixed term exclusions of one day's duration and related to serious incidents.
14. As noted in the last inspection, relationships between pupils are good. Pupils are aware of the impact of their actions on others and respect one another's feelings, values and beliefs. They usually co-operate well together in pairs and groups and help each other with their work. This was seen in a Year 7 geography lesson when pupils worked together comparing and contrasting two regions in France. There are occasions when pupils misbehave when asked to work independently and this impedes their learning. For example, in a Year 4 group reading lesson when working on their own in the hall, a group of seven pupils achieved very little.
15. The pupils develop good attitudes in the school. Pupils of all ages have classroom responsibilities, assisting with the distribution of resources within lessons. There are many opportunities as pupils move through the school for their personal development to be enhanced. Year 4 pupils participate in a residential trip, Year 5 pupils have been working with children with physical and learning difficulties through a drama group and another group of pupils is developing a video about drugs and bullying for use in local schools. Year 7 pupils have the opportunity to be monitors and assist around the school in several ways. They take their responsibilities very seriously. Their contribution is valued by the school community, for example office staff rely on monitors to assist with administrative duties. There is currently no opportunity for pupils to be involved in discussions about school development, such as through a school council.
16. Attendance has remained at roughly the same level since the last inspection and is currently broadly in line with the national average. The majority of pupils arrive at school punctually.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

17. There has been a considerable emphasis over the last two years on improving the quality of teaching. Monitoring of lessons, providing feedback to teachers on how they might improve and regular staff training have all had a beneficial effect. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, when teaching in a quarter of lessons was less than satisfactory. Teaching during this inspection was unsatisfactory in only 5% of lessons. It was good or better in two-thirds and very good or excellent in a quarter of lessons. Teaching is good at Key Stage 2, where there is a high proportion of very good or excellent teaching. This is a major factor in the improved standards being achieved in Year 6.
18. The national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have generally been successfully implemented in each classroom, and as a consequence the teaching of both English and mathematics is good. In both cases this is raising standards. Reading is taught well and pupils are encouraged to read challenging and sophisticated texts. Many teachers also promote speaking and listening skills well through the quality of their questioning and the detail that they require from pupils' responses. Teachers ensure that pupils develop a variety of methods when calculating either mentally or when using formal written methods. These skills are consolidated well when subsequent tasks and activities are provided at different levels to meet the range of abilities in each class, and when teachers set problems to be solved or investigations to be undertaken.
19. Teaching is often expertly undertaken, as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where high expectations contributed to the rapid pace at which pupils consolidated their knowledge and learnt new ideas. High expectations and challenge also helped to promote high standards and elicited thoughtful responses from Year 7 pupils as they studied the poem 'The Lady of Shallot'. The teacher's good command of the subject and the probing use of questions enabled the pupils

to establish meaning from the poem. Very good learning also took place in a Year 5 English lesson when the confident and enjoyable approach of the teacher, coupled with high expectations and the imaginative use of computers generated much interest and enthusiasm in the pupils. They worked hard and concentrated well throughout the lesson. Lively teaching also produced a good response from the pupils in a Year 4 literacy lesson and retained their interest as they wrote interesting sentences using words that they had been learning in spelling activities.

20. Lesson planning is usually thorough, well structured and in the best lessons it builds on well from what has been learnt before. These qualities were put to particularly good effect in a Year 6 design and technology lesson and ensured that all pupils remained very well focused on the task to plan a vehicle. Specialist music teaching to whole classes and for instrumentalists is consistently of a high quality and inspires the pupils. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, the material on musical structures was presented imaginatively and built upon the excellent rapport between teacher and class. The basic skills of musicianship, such as bowing and note-making were taught well to Year 4 pupils learning to play the violin. Clear expectations for the lesson resulted in keen and interested pupils, who worked hard to improve their technique.
21. A bilingual classroom assistant provides effective support for pupils at early and more advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. The pupils are taught in small groups, withdrawn from lessons. The quality of this work is good and invaluable for developing their English as well as raising their self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition good teaching of language and literacy across the school enables these pupils to learn English faster and make good progress. Teachers mostly incorporate the information in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs well into their lesson planning. Effective support is provided, enabling these pupils to participate fully in lessons and make similar progress as others in their class.
22. Teachers generally give pupils a reasonably clear picture of the progress that they have made in a lesson, often by moving around the room talking to pupils while they undertake particular tasks. By contrast the quality of the feedback that pupils are given through marking is inconsistent. There are examples where comments have been provided on pieces of work, which give a clear indication of how well the pupil has done and what steps are to be taken to improve their work. These are rare, in spite of the school policy that this should be normal practice. Marking is therefore of limited use for many pupils and in some classes there are considerable gaps between pieces of work being marked. The practice of pupils marking their work can be valuable, but is unproductive if errors are marked as correct and not subsequently checked.
23. In spite of the improvements in teaching there is still room for further developments. Where teaching has shortcomings this is partly because lessons are pitched at the middle ability in the class, with insufficient challenge for the more able. Some teachers still use a relatively limited range of teaching methods, a weakness highlighted at the last inspection, and do not pay sufficient attention to whether pupils are learning new ideas at an appropriate pace. Finally, there are inconsistencies in the way in which some teachers control the pupils. They turn to reprimand and punishment too quickly, which produces a negative atmosphere in these classes.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils are good and have improved since the last inspection, when some aspects were judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has maintained breadth and balance in the curriculum. The school has met the needs of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy without neglecting the other important aspects of the curriculum. The school has successfully tackled the shortcomings in planning identified in the previous report. There is a much greater focus on what pupils are expected to learn in individual subjects. Schemes of work, supported by national guidance, ensure that the curriculum builds progressively through the school. Now that learning is more clearly focused, it is easier for the school to identify areas of weakness and develop strategies for improvement. Key Stage 2 experiences are enriched by the introduction of French to the curriculum from Year 5; however, insufficient time is allocated to the subject in Year 7.

25. Much activity is targeted at improving important skills and supporting the pupils' personal development. The school has introduced secure strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. This has a beneficial effect, particularly for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Many of these pupils have so far, developed their spoken English more than their writing. They are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding more securely through discussion. Although standards in writing have improved and the school has strategies in place to improve this aspect of English further, more opportunities need to be provided for all pupils to develop their writing in other subjects. Provision for ICT has improved significantly. Teachers are able to involve pupils more productively because of the use of the ICT suite.
26. There is good equality of access and opportunity. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language either in normal classes or in small withdrawal groups for specialist teaching. This ensures that these pupils can have full access to the curriculum and to the other opportunities provided by the school. Pupils are organised in mathematics sets, enabling pupils of similar abilities to be taught together. Joint planning between teachers ensures that pupils in the same year groups but in different classes have similar experiences; however, there is some variation between classes in the subsequent quality of teaching.
27. The curriculum continues to be considerably enhanced by visits and visitors. The local community makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visitors have contributed to the development of the Millennium Garden Project, which was designed by the pupils. A wide range of visits is made to museums and art galleries, and some pupils were invited to spend the day at the Millennium Dome last year to celebrate the award they won in connection with their Garden project. Residential trips to support learning take place in Year 4 when pupils go to Dorset, and in Year 7 to Wales. Places of worship are visited to explore and compare different beliefs. Provision of extra-curricular activities, particularly for music, is very good. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PHSE) which includes sex education and a drugs awareness programme. The lessons observed during the inspection made a very good contribution to the pupils' social development. The rich experiences of music enjoyed by the pupils enhance their cultural development. The emphasis on personal development, which includes encouraging pupils to work independently and to be aware of the world around them, prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Good links have been established with local high schools, for example through provision for the pupils to undertake food technology lessons there.
28. The ethos of the school encourages inclusion. The school has a comprehensive programme to celebrate festivals and participate, for example in 'Black History' month, although there remain some occasions when opportunities are lost to celebrate richness and diversity amongst the pupils. Assemblies encourage pupils to think about the world about them and to share in each other's success. As a result, the provision for the pupils' personal development is good.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. Staff know the pupils well and take good care of them. The steps taken to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Risk assessments are carried out annually and there is a system of reporting concerns so that they can be dealt with promptly. Arrangements for the monitoring of pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development are adequate.
30. There is a welfare officer who has a recently refurbished area in the school in which pupils are cared for if they feel unwell. This is a good facility. The school nurse is very supportive and assists in PSHE education lessons. She also provides counselling for individual pupils as well as accompanying the Year 4 residential visit. This enables all pupils, regardless of any medical difficulties that they may have, to attend and participate fully in all activities. This is valued by pupils and their parents. Very good care is taken of pupils who have specific medical difficulties. Procedures for dealing with child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher is the designated teacher and he has received training which has been disseminated to the rest of the staff.

31. Arrangements to settle new pupils into the school are appropriate. As well as a programme of visits while they are still in Year 3 of the adjacent first school, they participate in a trail organised by Year 7 pupils. They enjoy this and it helps them find their way around their new school.
32. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory overall. Whilst there is very good practice in some classes, this is not consistent throughout the school. Where practice works well, teachers focus on rewarding good behaviour rather than giving attention to those misbehaving. The policy does not include guidance on how to deal effectively with challenging behaviour and there is a tendency for some teachers to be negative in their approach. Some staff quickly move to punishments, including exclusion from lessons. Circle times are in use in some classes and others are involved in a project to discuss behavioural issues within their class. Pupils talk about being given useful help to deal with bullying situations. Lunchtime staff do their best to manage the behaviour of pupils while they are eating their lunch and in the playground; however, they do not have regular meetings with senior staff to discuss any difficulties they are having and need assistance to control pupils effectively. Most pupils talk about enjoying break and lunchtimes, although a few talk about incidents which they find difficult to cope with.
33. Systems and procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory in core subjects. A wide range of standardised tests is used, and the pupils' attainment on entry to the school assessed at the start of Year 4. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring of pupils' progress in reading, which are supporting pupils' progress well. Teachers assess samples of pupils' unaided writing but this is not always accurate or consistent across the school. Attainment data from national tests is carefully analysed. The school is currently developing the use of assessment data to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. This is a recent initiative, the impact of which has yet to be seen. In other subjects teachers assess pupils' work at the end of each unit but there is no formal assessment or systematic tracking of skills. At the time of the previous inspection the use of assessment information in curriculum planning was identified as a key issue for improvement. The school has introduced several initiatives to remedy this weakness; however, whilst this is providing much useful data on pupils' progress, the use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is limited. Assessment information is satisfactorily used to match the work to the needs of the pupils in English and mathematics; however, the information gained from the assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills in science is not used to guide curricular planning.
34. There are effective procedures for assessing pupils' fluency in English as an additional language. Class teachers and the specialist staff jointly make this assessment, and information is used for planning future work for these pupils. Information gathered about pupils with special educational needs from all sources is well used and readily available to all class teachers. Targets on individual education plans are appropriate, clear and regularly reviewed. Support staff use them well to improve the attainment of pupils, and they are incorporated well into planning by most class teachers, although strategies to support pupils with behaviour difficulties are not always appropriate in class lessons. Records provide accurate profiles of special needs, and enable progress to be effectively monitored. Annual reviews set clear and appropriate targets, which are regularly reviewed.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

35. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed a favourable view of the school, in contrast to those who returned the questionnaire, some of whom are not happy with significant aspects of the school's work. This represents a deterioration in parental satisfaction since the last inspection when views were much more positive. The inspection findings did not bear out parents' negative views, but the fact that so many are dissatisfied is a matter that needs tackling promptly.
36. There are five areas where a significant minority of parents are dissatisfied. These are: homework, teaching, being kept well informed about their child's progress, the school working closely with parents and activities outside lessons. Homework was judged by inspectors to support learning well. When it was set during the inspection week, it directly related to learning

in classes and was valued and referred to in subsequent lessons. Weaknesses were identified in that expectations are not made clear to parents, home/school link books are not used regularly by all teachers and homework is not always given consistently across year groups. Teaching was judged to be good overall, but there was some unsatisfactory teaching and this may have a greater impact on some pupils than others. Several parents referred to the high turnover of staff and that their children had more than one teacher teaching their classes. Whilst this has obviously been disruptive, pupils are making good progress overall. The school provides a good range of after-school activities for pupils to participate in. There have been changes to the way this has been organised recently which may have contributed to dissatisfaction levels.

37. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Regular newsletters provide general information although they do not include specific details explaining staff absences and likely return dates. Annual reports on each child's progress cover all subjects taught but could be more useful to parents as they do not always include judgements on all aspects within each subject. For example, some reports do not refer to reading ability when reporting on English. Information evenings about the curriculum are held and there is an opportunity each term for parents to discuss their child's progress with their class teacher.
38. The school has effective links with parents. The headteacher spends much time with parents discussing individual pupils and situations. The majority of parents find him and other staff approachable and accessible. There have been occasions in the recent past when staffing situations have not been fully explained to parents and this may have contributed to dissatisfaction levels. Also, the parents of children with special educational needs are not fully involved in reviewing their child's progress.
39. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Parents and grandparents assist in classes with reading and small group work, for example supporting pupils working on the computer in a Year 6 ICT lesson. The inconsistencies with homework and home/school link books are likely to be restricting parents' involvement with their child's learning at home. Parents are very supportive of fundraising initiatives and raise approximately £8,000 for the school every year.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

40. The headteacher, who was the deputy at the time of the previous inspection, has a clear educational vision that is shared and supported by the Governing Body and staff of the school. There is an emphasis on a broad and relevant education and encouraging each pupil to achieve his or her best, without placing undue emphasis on preparing pupils in Year 6 for national tests. This is seen as a positive change in ethos and direction by all concerned.
41. A major factor in helping the school to move forward is the increased emphasis placed on monitoring and evaluation, which is now good, and the rigour with which it is carried out. All staff with management responsibilities are involved appropriately, and external expertise and guidance used effectively. While this aspect was generally satisfactory during the previous inspection, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching was underdeveloped and the school was required to develop better procedures. This has been done and the result is a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2. The expectations of staff with management responsibilities are clear and most fulfil their roles well, although there are occasions when a little more initiative and responsibility would drive developments more effectively. Good leadership and management result in the school being largely successful in fulfilling its aims and ensuring that the values encompassed in them underpin its work. A relatively large minority of parents, however, does not believe that leadership and management of the school is effective. This may be rooted in a small number of issues, such as the limited involvement of parents whose children have special educational needs and the high numbers of teachers some classes have had in a short period of time. Nevertheless, there is a need to explore these views with parents and ensure that a higher proportion feels more widely involved in the education of their children.
42. The Governing Body has been re-formed since the previous inspection, following the separation



of the joint first and middle school body in 1999. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and are committed to eliminating any remaining obstacles to improvement. They have been effective in supporting and monitoring the school since the last inspection and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. School development planning is now more rigorous and based upon a more secure analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Priorities are clear and there is a good focus on raising standards. The thoroughness with which the plan is prepared, including governor involvement, has enabled the school to make secure progress in tackling the key issues from the previous inspection, especially over the last two years. The amount and variety of data collected to track pupils' progress is increasing, although there is still more scope to feed this back into planning the curriculum and setting targets. The funding available to the school, particularly that for specific purposes such as staff training and for pupils with special educational needs, is used effectively. Financial planning is supported well by the cycle of school development planning. Satisfactory use is made of the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services.

43. Staffing levels are satisfactory, although the school has experienced a high turnover of staff in recent years. Most teachers are experienced and well qualified. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Arrangements for the professional development and training of staff are good, as are the induction arrangements for staff new to the school. The overall quantity and quality of learning resources are good. The recently established ICT suite is having a significant impact on raising the pupils' skill levels. The library is a valuable and well-used resource, which is stocked with a very good range of fiction and non-fiction books. A wide selection of fiction books is also readily accessible in classrooms. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although many classrooms are small, making movement around them difficult, especially for older pupils and large mathematics sets. Appropriate use is made of the temporary accommodation available for more practical aspects of design and technology and science. High quality displays in classrooms and corridors provide a stimulating learning environment and are used well to celebrate the achievements of the school and its pupils.
44. The school has largely overcome the weaknesses that were previously impeding the pupils' progress and the standards that they could therefore achieve. A significant change in ethos and direction is being undertaken, with indicators of success already evident. This has been possible largely because of the improvements made to the way in which the school is managed and the focus provided by the leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and governors. The school is therefore in a good position to sustain, continue and build upon these recent improvements and to raise standards further.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

45. To build on the progress made in the recent months and to raise standards further, the school should:
  - 1) Increase the teaching time for physical education throughout the school and for French in Year 7, and in the case of French improve the quality of teaching; (paragraphs 9, 24, 71, 72 and 90)
  - 2) Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their writing through subjects other than English; (paragraphs 25 and 52)
  - 3) Ensure that teachers use assessment information more effectively to guide their planning and to set tasks and activities that better meet the needs of all pupils; (paragraph 33)
  - 4) Ensure that staff consistently implement the marking policy and provide pupils with a clear indication of the quality of their work and what is needed for its improvement; (paragraph 22)
  - 5) Improve and extend the methods used by teachers when managing and improving the behaviour of pupils. (paragraphs 23 and 32)

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

46. In addition to the items above, the governors may wish to consider the inclusion of the following points in their action plan.
- Develop and implement a policy and programmes for gifted and talented pupils. (paragraph 10)
  - Identify the reasons for the high level of parental dissatisfaction in the responses to the questionnaire and seek to improve parental confidence in the school. (paragraph 35)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	18	43	29	5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	363
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	95

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	54	37	91

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	37	40	49
	Girls	34	31	35
	Total	71	71	84
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	78 (77)	78 (69)	92 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	38	40	38
	Girls	31	32	30
	Total	69	72	68
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	76 (76)	79 (67)	75 (76)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	7
Black – other	9
Indian	78
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	196
Any other minority ethnic group	47

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	30.3

#### **Education support staff: Y4 – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	265

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	792082
Total expenditure	809837
Expenditure per pupil	2225
Balance brought forward from previous year	118072
Balance carried forward to next year	100317

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	363
Number of questionnaires returned	81

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	60	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	51	16	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	65	7	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	42	26	19	0
The teaching is good.	25	51	19	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	51	28	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	43	14	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	31	49	14	4	2
The school works closely with parents.	19	44	32	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	23	52	12	6	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	60	11	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	32	38	15	2

### Other issues raised by parents

The views of parents who attended the parents' meeting were different from those in the questionnaire. Parents were more positive in their support of the work of the school and the leadership of the headteacher and governors. They commented that staff changes have unsettled some classes and that shared teaching groups are not ideal. They were very pleased with the wide range of opportunities provided for their pupils to develop their musical talents. They generally felt well informed about how well their children are doing and that staff and the headteacher were always available to listen to their concerns.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

47. National Curriculum test results in English for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were in line with the national average but well below average compared with similar schools. They were similar to results in mathematics and science. The school did not achieve its targets for English in 2000 but as a result of considerable improvements in 2001 the school's target has been exceeded. Test results fell from a high point in 1998, to 2000 when they were similar to those at the last inspection, while over the same period national results have risen. Standards in writing were considerably lower than in reading, with boys doing particularly badly, which contributed to the recent downward trend in results. Improving writing has been a major focus for the school in the last year, with the strategies introduced meeting with much success. There has been a considerable improvement in 2001 in writing results, particularly for boys, which has produced a similar improvement in overall English test results.
48. Inspection evidence shows that overall standards in English are at least average for eleven-year-old pupils. A very high proportion of the pupils in the current Year 6 attain the level expected for their age, and nearly half of them attain higher levels. These standards are maintained in Year 7. The school has maintained the good standards in speaking and listening reported at the last inspection, and improved standards in reading from satisfactory to very good; however, standards in writing have declined to unsatisfactory, a matter of much concern to the school. The effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and additional sessions for reading and writing are having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning in these areas. The overall quality of English teaching is good, although it is better in Key Stage 2 than in Year 7. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was only satisfactory. High expectations of behaviour and work are features of the best teaching. This has significant impact on pupils' learning. Pupils generally behave well, remain on task throughout the lesson and make good progress. In several lessons where teaching was very good, activities were very carefully planned for different groups of pupils with a good choice of resources. The main weakness of unsatisfactory teaching is a lack of skill in managing and engaging pupils in lessons.
49. Support for the development of literacy in other subjects is satisfactory. Subjects such as mathematics, history and geography are used for developing subject-specific vocabulary and the language of problem-solving and explanation. The good teaching across the school helps pupils learning English as an additional language to make good progress in English. The provision for reading is very good. Initiatives such as the Additional Literacy Support (ALS) have proved beneficial for pupils who are attaining below the expected level for their age and early-stage learners of English. Classroom assistants have been trained in this programme, which is making a difference to pupils' reading. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported, and they make satisfactory progress. Their individual education plans have a clear focus on their needs in language and literacy.
50. The pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening as they move up the school and attain standards that are above the expected level for their age by the time they are eleven. Pupils listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other. Most pupils make contributions to lessons and answer teachers' questions readily and with enthusiasm. Pupils pay attention to what others say and use appropriate language in discussions, which is often aided by very good teaching. During a shared text session in Year 6, the teacher used questions skilfully to engage pupils in discussing the author's style in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. Pupils also give good responses during the revision of previous learning or the summing-up of the lesson.
51. Pupils make very good progress in reading; they achieve very well and their attainment is well above national expectations by the time they are eleven. Good procedures for assessment and very good provision of books support progress in reading. Most pupils in Year 6 read very fluently and accurately with expression and understanding. They can discuss the main points and themes of the texts they read, and make predictions and inferences. Pupils, particularly

high- and average-attaining pupils in all years, enjoy reading a wide range of literature. For example, they read modern children's novels, classics, poetry and non-fiction. In Year 7, the pupils' work on *Macbeth* and *The Canterbury Tales* shows their depth of reading and understanding of the significant authors of the past. Teachers generally have a good understanding of how to teach reading as well as developing pupils' taste for literature. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher used questions very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott*. The pupils in Year 6 learn to compare different poets and their styles after reading the work of famous children's poets. Pupils develop a good understanding of poetic forms and techniques through the high expectations of their teachers. In a Year 5 lesson for example, pupils of different abilities were able to explain what makes poetry enjoyable by discussing rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, onomatopoeia and metaphors. This enjoyment of reading influenced their writing. The pupils wrote poems following a model and used words to create sounds in them. The pupils in Year 4 develop basic skills of reading effectively through systematic teaching of phonic skills and word level work. By Years 6 and 7, pupils acquire good library skills for finding information from books and other sources and use them in various study projects.

52. The high standards of reading are not reflected in the pupils' writing. About three-quarters of the pupils in Year 6 reach standards expected for their age. The school has introduced several strategies to improve pupils' skills in writing and as a result progress is more rapid and standards are rising; however, assessment in writing is not always accurate across the school to ensure consistency in tracking progress. There are now more opportunities for pupils to write for a range and variety of purposes in both key stages. For example, pupils wrote poetry on 'War and Peace' using similes and metaphors, and pupils in Year 6 have written a persuasive letter to the council on the lack of a Lollipop Lady. Additional Literacy Support (ALS) for Year 4 pupils, appropriate reading materials for boys and the teaching of writing following the texts of the literacy hour are having a beneficial impact on standards. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher used various types of performance poetry to enthuse the pupils to write their own. Teachers ensure that pupils acquire conventions of writing from what they read. This was observed in a Year 6 lesson, where the pupils identified features of a traditional tale to plan their own stories. Higher and middle-attaining pupils have developed good technical accuracy, which is evident in their use of grammatically correct complex sentences and a range of punctuation. They attain satisfactory standards in spelling and handwriting, which is fluent, joined and legible. The main weakness of the lower-attaining pupils across the school is that they do not write fluently at length. Pupils make good progress in Year 7 where the majority demonstrate satisfactory skills of writing in English.
53. The monitoring of planning and teaching has helped the school to identify weaknesses and to introduce the steps needed to improve standards, particularly in writing. Pupils' writing now needs to be developed through other subjects and National Curriculum levels more consistently understood by sharing examples of standards expected.

## **MATHEMATICS**

54. National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds in mathematics were close to the national average in 2000 and below results in similar schools. There was a sharp decline in 1999, following a high point in 1998 when Pinner Park was in the top 5% of schools, but an improvement in 2000. Results in 2000 were virtually identical to those at the last inspection and similar to English and science. There has been a further improvement in results in 2001 with more pupils achieving above the expected level for their age. Over this period there has been no significant pattern to any variation in results between boys and girls.
55. There has been an improvement at Key Stage 2 this year and standards are above average as a result of some good and very good teaching. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well and make good progress. Several Year 6 pupils are working at a level expected at the age of 14. Standards in Year 7 are close to national expectations. Pupils achieve appropriately and make satisfactory progress. There is much evidence in Key Stage 2 of a considerable proportion of pupils working at levels above expectations for their age, with few below. The exception to this is in Year 4, where more pupils have special educational needs and, overall, pupils achieve standards



expected for their age. Teachers have focused well on developing the pupils' number skills in mathematics lessons and provide opportunities for them to use and apply these skills to solving problems and investigations. More could be done to develop these skills in other subjects. Pupils handle and interpret data well, many using computers to support them in their presentations; however, some teachers need to plan more opportunities for the systematic use of ICT to support learning in mathematics.

56. Teaching is good overall, being better at Key Stage 2 than in Year 7. Some teaching is of the highest quality and accounts for the good progress being made by pupils at Key Stage 2. The main features of the daily mathematics lesson have been introduced into all classrooms. Mental sessions at the start of lessons are used well to sharpen the pupils' recall of number facts. Most teachers use a good range of interesting activities, although in some classrooms the methods used are unimaginative and lack variety. The more interesting activities capture the pupils' attention, encourage their participation and enable them to consolidate their skills well. For example, individual pupils sat on the 'hot seat' in a Year 4 classroom to answer questions posed by others, while in another Year 4 class pupils were required to double or halve numbers depending on the colour of a bean-bag drawn out. In a very challenging Year 6 session, the pupils were required to estimate the capacity of containers and to express their answers in different metric units such as litres, millilitres or centilitres.
57. The teaching of the main section of each lesson is usually direct and based on clear intentions of what the pupils are to learn. Challenging teaching with high expectations of what the pupils can achieve were features of the best lessons. For example, in a Year 7 lesson the teacher generated a lively pace as the pupils chose the appropriate operations to use when solving various mathematical problems. Questioning was also used to very good effect in a Year 6 top set, and the teacher adapted the lesson well as difficulties arose in the pupils' understanding. Most concentrated hard and were prepared to answer in depth when required. The main learning points were drawn out well so that by the end of the session all pupils understood the difference between capacity and volume and the different metric units of measure. Pupils are taught in ability sets throughout the school. Some teachers use this well and provide work at up to three different levels, thus extending the more able while providing weaker pupils with the opportunity to consolidate their learning at an appropriate pace and with support. This is not the case in all classes where this fine-tuning is missing, with work pitched at the middle of the class, slowing the pace at which pupils learn. Review sessions at the end of each lesson are generally used well to recap what has been learnt, to share with pupils an assessment of the progress that has been made and to provide an insight into what is to be learnt next.
58. The co-ordinator has been in post for less than a term and as yet has only been able to influence standards in the year group in which she teaches. Monitoring of planning and teaching has been instrumental in helping to raise standards; however, there is scope for standards to rise further. Teachers need to plan for the systematic use of ICT to support learning, regularly provide tasks at a range of levels and extend the activities used in mental arithmetic sessions.

## **SCIENCE**

59. Results in the Key Stage 2 national tests rose in 2000 and were in line with those achieved nationally, similar to those in English and mathematics but below results in similar schools. The 2001 results are similar to 2000, although more pupils achieved above the level expected for their age. They were close to test results at the time of the previous inspection, when the attainment demonstrated by the pupils in their lessons and day-to-day work was lower. Overall, attainment was average and the pupils' achievements satisfactory; these standards have been maintained. There is now a much closer match between the pupils' knowledge and understanding and their performance in the tests. There is no pattern to the difference in performance in the tests between boys and girls from year to year. Progress in acquiring investigative skills was unsatisfactory in the previous inspection. This has improved and is now satisfactory. The pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 and they achieve at appropriate levels. This is because the quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now good, whereas a significant minority of lessons were taught unsatisfactorily during the previous inspection.

60. Over the last few years the school has decided to ensure that Year 6 pupils are prepared for their National Curriculum tests through revision and practice tests, but without spending too much time on this. In parallel, there has been an increased emphasis on developing the pupils' enquiry skills in the belief that this will make sure that they understand their work rather than simply recalling it. The early evidence is that this approach is working. Test results are rising again and many pupils demonstrate a good level of understanding of scientific ideas, including of work covered some years before. Some pupils demonstrate a very sophisticated level of scientific understanding. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 for example, understand the role of photosynthesis in food production. One pupil in Year 5 was able to work out that the genetic makeup of a seed from a flowering plant would be a combination of that from the parents, but that of a spore from only one parent, was likely to be the same as the parent's. The school now needs to implement a system to identify those pupils who are gifted in science and develop a programme so that they consistently receive the depth of challenge needed to ensure that they reach their full potential.
61. The pupils often make good progress in individual lessons. Teachers are clear about what they expect the pupils to learn, and the activities and resources chosen support these intentions well. In Year 7 lessons for example, the variety of plants available for the pupils to study interested them and motivated them to make observations and discuss them with others. Because the pupils were so well focused the teacher and learning support assistants were able to move around groups, checking and developing their understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language generally make good progress, especially when supported by learning assistants. Most pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test and can make predictions and evaluate their work. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher had analysed that they were less clear about basing their predictions upon what they know and planning their approaches with sufficient attention to detail. Some very good learning took place as the teacher worked with persistence to get the pupils to write specifically what they intended to investigate and precisely how they would do it. There is now a need to build upon the improvements that have taken place to provide more opportunities for the pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding and develop their learning further through the scientific enquiries that they carry out.
62. The monitoring and development of teaching, particularly through the evaluation of the pupils' enquiry skills has been the focus of much work within the school. The outcome is much improved provision, rising standards and better teaching. The impact of management on the subject is good. The headteacher is taking temporary responsibility for the subject during the prolonged absence of the co-ordinator. More formal arrangements are now necessary if the impetus of improvement is not to be lost.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

63. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are above those expected nationally by the age of eleven and in Year 7. There are some good examples of displays around the school, which support other areas of the curriculum, for example a display drawn from a study of the Jewish faith and another on the ancient Egyptians. Good use of artefacts and paintings is made to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject.
64. Teaching is good overall. In all lessons seen, planning was thorough, learning objectives were shared and pupils were challenged. Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils can do. Care is taken to ensure that there is progression in skills throughout the school. Review sessions at the end of lessons examine the outcome of the activities. Pupils are encouraged to think about the materials they are using and how to obtain the best results. Lessons are linked to other subjects, as in a Year 6 class when pupils used the drawings they had done in connection with a science study as the basis for their aboriginal-style bark paintings. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress.
65. An examination of the art portfolio and work around the school revealed that there is great care taken to develop techniques at a more advanced level as pupils progress through the school. There are some very good examples of this in work done by pupils on tone. Pupils are encouraged to look at the work of artists such as Lautrec and Paul Klee. They are also

encouraged to attempt other techniques such as the use of quill pens when studying the Victorians.

66. Release time has been used by the co-ordinator to undertake monitoring of the subject, which has enabled a realistic evaluation to take place. Improvements in planning and the provision of schemes of work have supported development in the subject. Assessment has been identified as the next stage in development and the school is now looking at adopting the systems of assessment identified in a national scheme. This should ensure continued improvement in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

67. The attainment of pupils is much higher than at the time of the previous inspection and is now in line with that expected, both by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. The pupils now have the opportunity to work with a wider variety of materials, including food, and more emphasis is placed on developing their knowledge, understanding and skills progressively as they get older. Importantly, the quality of the teaching observed has improved significantly. All teaching was at least good, with some exemplary practice. Consequently the pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve at appropriate levels across the school.
68. There is a good structure to the work provided. Pupils in Year 6, for example, had carried out a series of activities to help them to develop their understanding and skills before applying these ideas to their own project: designing and building a powered vehicle. The pupils knew what they were doing and why. They could explain how their ideas had developed over the course of the work. They maintained a very good focus, enabling the teacher to spend time with individuals, discussing their ideas in depth. The teacher monitored the pupils' progress, identifying general weaknesses. This resulted in well-timed interventions by the teacher to ensure that the pupils focused their time and energy on the most important aspects of their designs. Excellent teaching resulted in excellent learning. Pupils in Year 7 were able to build upon the knowledge and skills that they had developed in earlier years to clarify and refine their ideas by using models and evaluating their own work and that of others. Effective management by the teacher meant that comments were well focused and the pupils responded positively to their peers evaluating their work. The quality of the pupils' designs improved as a result.
69. The co-ordinator provides very good subject leadership and direction for future development and to build upon the good progress made in recent years. The quality of subject guidance for other teachers has improved since the previous inspection. There are good links with a local high school to support the development of work with food. The task now is to ensure that practice in all classrooms matches that of the best.

## **FRENCH**

70. At Key Stage 2, standards in French are close to the average and most pupils are achieving satisfactorily. It was not possible to see any Year 6 lessons during the inspection and judgements for these pupils are based on an examination of their work. There is an appropriate emphasis on listening skills and on acquiring vocabulary at this stage. In Year 5, most pupils can understand simple questions on several topics and are able to give their names and say briefly how they are today. A few pupils are able to answer several consecutive questions about themselves. Many pupils are responsive and offer days of the week, months of the year, numbers or colours in response to their teacher's questions, but mainly by reading the words from their booklet of worksheets. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Good use is made of cassettes to help improve pronunciation and pupils enjoyed singing several songs with the French person on the cassette.
71. Standards in Year 7 are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory, a deterioration since the last inspection. Most pupils are able to understand single questions on a variety of topics such as the weather, their favourite school subject and whether they have brothers or sisters. They do not have the opportunity to listen to more varied material such as short conversations on cassette, so are not developing their listening skills to appropriate levels. As at Key Stage 2, most pupils can give their names and say how they feel. Many can say whether they have

brothers or sisters, but most pupils can only answer questions or count to fifty with the written support in their booklet of worksheets. One technique used by the teacher to encourage pupils unable to answer is to mouth or say the word or phrase, which the pupil then repeats. In one Year 7 group most of the pupils could answer only with this support, for instance to state the time or say why they liked a subject. No additional practice or further work was done to ensure that the majority of the pupils could remember these phrases by the end of the lesson. Teaching in Year 7 is unsatisfactory overall. Most instructions and explanations at both key stages are in English, although the policy is for these to be in French. The pupils do not use French even at the simplest level to communicate in the classroom, for instance to ask for a worksheet. There is little evidence of pupils developing their reading beyond single sentences or short dialogues. The materials being used do not contain the short, simple stories or conversations, often illustrated with photographs or cartoons which are common in most course materials. These could help to meet National Curriculum requirements and provide some of the essential cultural background to the language and tasks at a variety of levels.

72. The key issue for the school at the last inspection was to improve planning to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3. Planning has improved substantially, but as indicated earlier the programmes of study are not yet being fully covered. Time is rather short for teaching French in Year 7, with one hour per week, but the work needs to be planned so that the pupils are helped to develop all their language skills to appropriate levels as well as covering the topic areas.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

73. Pupils achieve well and standards are above those expected nationally throughout the school. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 4 are able to use geographical terms, such as 'precipitation', and the 'Beaufort Scale', with confidence when working on a weather related topic. In Year 6, they know how to use secondary sources to investigate the impact of weather and how it affects people in various parts of the world. In a Year 5 numeracy lesson, pupils were able to identify the geographical links with the work they were undertaking on interpreting data from a bar chart. They were able to record these aspects confidently.
74. By the time they reach Year 7, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of other countries such as France. They can distinguish between human and physical geography with confidence and can compare and contrast the features of differing areas. In both key stages, pupils use appropriate vocabulary and demonstrate a growing understanding of the knowledge, skills and concepts required in the subject. An examination of pupils' work shows good progress over time throughout both key stages.
75. Teaching is good at both key stages. Activities are well organised and clearly explained. Time is used effectively and pupil behaviour is good. Most pupils show interest in the subject and sustain concentration well. Although some worksheets are used, there is not the heavy dependency on them that was noted in the last inspection report. Links with other subjects such as science and mathematics are developed; however, there are some occasions when opportunities for extended writing in the subject are lost.
76. The subject is led by the humanities co-ordinator who has opportunities to monitor the subject and to see the plans for each year group. Schemes of work have been established since the last inspection and a start has been made to develop assessment procedures in the subject. Good use is made of the environment to support the subject. Residential visits, which have geographical aspects, are made in Year 4 and Year 7. The school has a high commitment to environmental issues. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to take part and this, too, reinforces learning in the subject. Development of a more systematic way to monitor pupils' progress and attainment in the subject is needed to ensure continued improvement in standards.

## **HISTORY**

77. There has been considerable improvement in history since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. Attainment is now above nationally

expected levels in all year groups. Most pupils show a good understanding of life in the past, and they can identify artefacts in everyday use from different times. They can examine them carefully and draw conclusions about aspects of life in the past, and describe and suggest reasons for change. Many pupils can recall and describe details of a historical period that they have studied such as the Ancient Egyptians, the Tudors and the Victorians. They can contrast and compare the life at home and at school of Victorian children and themselves and describe in detail how the Second World War affected the lives of people afterwards. By Year 7, pupils have acquired an appropriate range of historical skills. They can distinguish between primary and secondary sources of information, and their work gives them a good sense of chronology.

78. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the best lessons, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of history is good, and well-designed and appropriate tasks are provided. These teachers convey enthusiasm for the subject and show imagination in their teaching of ideas and knowledge to the pupils. As a result most pupils show high levels of interest in the subject. They concentrate well, working independently or collaboratively as requested, and they respect the ideas and feelings of others. At both key stages concentration sometimes wavers in a few classes where teaching is less stimulating and there is little use of visual material or artefacts. Limited use is being made of ICT to support pupils' learning in history.
79. Visits and special activity days are used to provide practical activities and to promote interest in the subject, for example, the Year 5 Victorian Day, where all pupils and teachers dressed up in Victorian clothes for the day, and acted out the roles of a Victorian school. Visits are well chosen, and subsequent work is of a high standard.
80. Teachers' planning is supported by national guidance and by help from the co-ordinator. No formal monitoring of standards and teaching in history has taken place but plans are in place to introduce a new assessment system next year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

81. The school has made good progress in improving its provision for ICT since the previous inspection. The investment in a new computer suite has provided pupils with more regular and focused teaching and development of ICT skills. Resources have also been maintained at a satisfactory level to encourage access to computers outside the suite and to enable more individual use by pupils. Standards have improved as a result, with most pupils achieving satisfactorily and working at the levels expected, both by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. Some pupils are producing work of a high standard, for example demonstrating a good understanding of the effective use of presentation software. Teaching in the lessons observed was never less than satisfactory and often good; consequently it was good overall. This is enabling the pupils to make good progress in the development of their ICT skills. Some good examples of the pupils using ICT to support learning in other subjects, such as Year 5 literacy, were also observed; however, there is a need to provide more opportunities for this use in other subjects.
82. Most pupils have developed suitable basic skills by Year 4, so that they are confident and competent users of ICT. They routinely log onto the computer network, load software applications, print and save their work. Keyboard skills are satisfactory. This means that the pupils are able to work independently and explore the potential of the software, such as when developing ideas for their advertisements in a Year 4 lesson. The pupils achieved well in this lesson because the teacher was very clear about what the pupils were expected to do. They were kept focused on this throughout the lesson and required to evaluate their own and others' work at the end. Most lessons benefit from a good structure, with activities well planned to support the learning intended. Teacher introductions demonstrate clearly what the pupils need to do so that, as in a Year 7 lesson combining information from different sources, they can get on quickly and efficiently. This in turn enabled the teacher to spend time with individuals, sorting out difficulties and ensuring progress. Good use was also made of pupils' work to demonstrate good standards to others, so that all pupils were aware of where their work could improve.
83. Effective subject co-ordination, including the monitoring and development of teaching has supported the improvement in provision and standards. Examples of pupils' work are kept to

demonstrate the standards reached. This could now be developed to set targets with pupils and teachers. Continued work is also needed to develop the teachers' expertise to still higher levels. This will enable them to judge when to move the pupils on more quickly and in particular ensure that higher-attaining pupils are fully and consistently challenged.

## **MUSIC**

84. Music continues to be a major strength of the school. Its appreciation, performance and enjoyment play an important part of the life of the school.
85. Pupils are reaching very high standards in music for their age throughout the school because of the excellent teaching, which employs a wide range of effective methods, expert musical knowledge and outstanding skills. They achieve very well and make very good progress in all aspects of the subject. Teaching in all lessons (class and instrumental) at both key stages, displays very high expectations of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour. The teaching methods successfully integrate singing, music-making, performance, composition and appreciation. This involves all of the pupils' senses, celebrates their skill as musicians and is enormously enjoyable. A wide range of resources is used. Pupils have carefully planned opportunities to sing unaccompanied and with piano accompaniment, to move in time to music feeling the rhythm and pulse and play a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, creating their own music with a carefully planned structure. For example, pupils in a Year 5 lesson investigated the sounds made by different instruments and then used their findings to compose a group piece of 'weather' music observing pitch, duration, tempo, texture and musical structure.
86. Pupils sing clearly with verve and enthusiasm in music lessons, assemblies and choir practice, with accurate pitch, clear words and a strong sense of rhythm. They are developing a good repertoire of songs, which they know by heart. They sing in three parts, listening very carefully to each other's part, and using crescendo and diminuendo very effectively.
87. Pupils learn to understand and appreciate music from a wide range of sources including classical, folk music from around the world, and jazz. For example in a Year 6 lesson, after listening to 'Sonny Boy Williamson' and examining the structure of Blues music in the Southern United States of America, they were able to compose their own versions using a twelve-bar pattern and the pentatonic scale.
88. A wide range of instrumental teaching, in which more than half the school participates, enhances music provision in the school. There is an after-school string club, two choirs, a windband and a steel band which perform regularly in the locality. The school regularly takes part in the local music festival held at the Royal Albert Hall, and the steel band recently won an award in a competition organised by a national radio-station. Concerts for parents are usually held annually and a group of parents have their own steel band.
89. Standards and the quality of music provision are carefully monitored and the subject continues to maintain a high profile in the school. Standards in music are continually being sustained and improved.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

90. The standard of work seen in physical education has fallen since the last inspection. Achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected for the pupils' age. This is largely because the time allocated for physical education is shorter than in most similar schools, particularly so in Year 7. The result is that, although all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught during the year, they are not covered in sufficient depth or with sufficient regularity to enable the pupils to reach standards expected for their age.
91. It was only possible to observe lessons in the development of ball skills, team games and athletics because of the time of year and the organisation of the physical education curriculum. Standards in these aspects have fallen since the last inspection. For example, basic ball skills such as catching are weak. Pupils do not keep their eyes on the ball or absorb the pace of the

ball as it reaches them and as a consequence often drop quite routine passes.

92. Individual lessons are taught at least satisfactorily, but weaknesses in the pupils' basic skills slow learning considerably. Skills coaching, either through teacher or pupil demonstration, is generally effective. This is often followed by appropriate individual and group coaching. Lessons are structured well so that pupils can build their skills and then put them into operation in simple games. Teachers have to work hard to maintain the interest and attention of the pupils, and the responses of some were not always constructive. While many pupils tried hard to practise what they had been told, a significant minority, often the more able did not. Instructions were not always followed and in some cases individual pupils made it harder for their partner to succeed by deliberately throwing a ball too hard or not at a catchable height. Fair play and collaboration were not fostered effectively on these occasions. By contrast, the pupils' tactical awareness and team play is in advance of their ball skills. For example, few pupils in Year 7 threw accurately or caught the ball confidently during a practice session, but were aware of how to find space, dummy when throwing and outmanoeuvre an opponent when playing a four-a-side match.
93. One valuable aspect to the provision for physical education is the support provided by students undertaking sports coaching courses from a local college. This was particularly effective in Year 5, where the expert coaching that these students provided to small groups with teacher support enabled the pupils to achieve well and make good progress in the development of tennis, cricket and various athletics skills. Key Stage 2 pupils are taught swimming at a local pool. Most are able to reach the requirements of the National Curriculum by the age of eleven. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in adventurous activities on their residential trips in Years 5 and 7. Extra-curricular sports activities, largely run by parent volunteers, extend the skills of those who attend and enable them to participate in competitive matches against other schools.
94. The co-ordinator has been in post since the start of the year. No formal monitoring of teaching and standards has taken place, although teachers are supported in planning their lessons. There has been no significant improvement in the indoor accommodation and fixed apparatus since the last inspection when these were judged to be unsatisfactory. The weekly time allocation to teach physical education needs to be increased if standards are to improve, and an arrangement made so that individual aspects are taught consistently throughout the year.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

95. Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school when learning about religion and from religion. Standards are in line with and sometimes above the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the age of eleven and continue as such into Year 7.
96. Throughout the school, pupils celebrate a range of festivals from the major religions and can talk with increasing understanding about the customs, practices, food and clothing associated with such festivals. They can compare and contrast features from different festivals, and respond to spiritual and religious aspects of festivals and stories. For example, pupils in Year 4 have carried out a survey of the religious traditions of pupils in the school, and reflected on the similarities and differences of beliefs in the Hindu, Christian and Muslim traditions.
97. Pupils throughout the school develop their understanding of what is involved in belonging to a faith community and can compare and contrast places of worship. They work hard to develop their own insights into the meaning of faith and its relevance to everyday life. They listened with respect and interest as a Muslim boy read from the Q'uran and demonstrated his prayers to the whole class. Most pupils respond thoughtfully and with sensitivity to other people's views and moral issues. In Year 5, pupils learn about holy books of the Christian and Muslim religion, and consider the meanings behind stories and events recorded in these scriptures. Pupils readily express interest in stories from different faiths and are respectful of other religions and religious practices. They can recognise good and bad characters in stories and relate religious teaching to their everyday life, such as how the pillars of Islam and the story of the Good Samaritan teach us to help our neighbours and the needy. They can apply these teachings to their everyday lives.

98. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Good use is made of religious artefacts, books and original source material. In one Year 6 lesson on the symbolism behind the Passover festival in the Jewish religion, the teacher enlivened the subject material by celebrating a 'Seder' meal in the classroom and by singing the *Ballad of the Four Sons*. Pupils have also studied the quality of leadership in a range of religious leaders including Martin Luther King, Gandhi and Mother Teresa. They have learnt about the ten commandments, and related these to group rules for the school. Pupils in Year 7 have reflected on how Christians show their beliefs in their lives, and how they practise forgiveness.
99. Teachers are provided with good support and guidance when planning lessons. No formal monitoring of the subject has taken place. The provision for religious education has improved considerably since the last inspection. Much useful work has been done in developing curriculum planning and in the careful selection of books and resources to meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Religious education makes an important contribution towards developing the pupils' understanding of other ways of life, both in other parts of the world and within multi-cultural Britain.